

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: OCCUPANCY TAX COORDINATION

DATE: MARCH 1, 2013

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS KENNY
CONOVER
DICKINSON
FRASIER
MASON

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:

SUPERVISORS MERLINO
BENTLEY

OTHERS PRESENT:

MICHAEL SWAN, TREASURER
KATE JOHNSON, DIRECTOR OF TOURISM
LEISA GRANT, PRINCIPAL ACCOUNT CLERK, TOURISM
MARTIN AUFFREDOU, COUNTY ATTORNEY
FRANK THOMAS, BUDGET OFFICER
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
SUPERVISORS MONROE
TAYLOR
STRAINER
DAVID BULMER, ALPINE MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS
JIM BIRRELL, MANAGING PARTNER, MEDALIST SPORTS, LLC
ANDREW RODEN, SPECIAL EVENTS COORDINATOR, MEDALIST SPORTS, LLC
FRED AUSTIN, FORT WILLIAM HENRY
GARY THORNUST, LAKE GEORGE R.V. PARK
CHRISTINA CURLEY, LAKE GEORGE REGIONAL CONVENTION & VISITORS
BUREAU
JOHN STROUGH, TOWN OF QUEENSBURY
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
THOM RANDALL, *ADIRONDACK JOURNAL*
JOANNE COLLINS, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mr. Kenny called the meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee to order at 11:27 a.m.

Motion was made by Mrs. Frasier, seconded by Mr. Dickinson and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mike Swan, County Treasurer, who stated that the 2012 books would be closed sometime next week. He reported that revenues collected as of February 25, 2013, had increased by 4.18% over the prior year, and the Designated Reserve Balance was \$348,113 for the period ending December 31, 2012.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Martin Auffredou, County Attorney, who advised the Chairman had requested he prepare revisions to the Warren County Occupancy Tax Law to include remarketers, as discussed at the January 31, 2013 meeting of the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee. Mr. Auffredou distributed draft copies of the resolution introducing proposed Local Law No. 6 of 2013 and noted that the newly incorporated provisions mirrored those adopted by Saratoga County; thereby including language from the New York State Tax Law. He said the July 1, 2013 effective date allowed time to inform remarketers of their obligation to comply with the local law. Mr. Auffredou stated that Local Law No. 6 of 2013 would be introduced at the March 15, 2013 Board meeting; thereby setting a public hearing to be held on April 20, 2013. If enacted on April 20th, he said, there would be sufficient time for necessary notification. He suggested that prior to March 15th, a meeting be arranged to include himself; Kate Johnson, Tourism Director; Mike Swan, Treasurer; and Kevin Geraghty, Chairman of the Board, regarding modifications to the draft resolution. Mr. Kenny noted that litigation had not ensued following Saratoga County's adoption of a similar resolution in of October 2012.

Motion was made by Mr. Dickinson, seconded by Mrs. Frasier and carried unanimously to introduce Local Law No. 6 of 2013 as outlined and the necessary resolution was authorized for the March 15, 2013 Board Meeting. *A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.*

Continuing with the agenda review, Mr. Kenny advised of a funding application from HITS, Inc., which requested additional funding for their 2013 Triathlon event to take place in the Town of Hague. The original request, he said, was for \$10,000 and the Occupancy Tax Committee had awarded \$4,000. Mr. Kenny further advised of a \$24,000 balance for event funding, due to the recent cancellation of the Last of the Mohicans Outdoor Drama. Mrs. Frasier stated the Triathlon event had grown from a local to a national event and a favorable turnout was anticipated. A short discussion ensued.

Motion was made by Mrs. Frasier, seconded by Mr. Conover and carried unanimously to award an additional \$3,000 in Occupancy Tax funding to HITS, Inc., for a total 2013 award amount of \$7,000, as outlined above. *Copies of the funding application and resolution request form are on file with the minutes.*

Privilege of the floor was extended to Dave Bulmer, Alpine Marketing Communications, who advised that Medalist Sports, LLC, an international sports management and production company headquartered in Atlanta, Georgia, was the company of choice to replace the Centurion Group who had cancelled their 2013 cycling event. Mr. Bulmer noted Medalist Sports, LLC hosted many larger cycling events throughout the country and the local event date had been moved from June to late September. The group, he said, had requested funding comparable to that which was previously awarded to the Centurion Group, who subsequently cancelled all 2013 events in the United States. Mr. Bulmer introduced Jim Birrell, Managing Partner, and Andrew Roden, Special Events Coordinator with Medalist Sports, LLC, who made a special trip for today's meeting. Mr. Bulmer noted he embarked on a search with representatives from the Lake George Regional Convention and Visitors Bureau (LGRCVB) and Medalist Sports was highly recommended by the Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA).

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mr. Birrell who reported that his involvement with Medalist Sports, LLC began in 1988 with the Tour De Trump international stage race which began in Albany and ran the eastern seaboard. He said dissolution of the group occurred by 1996; thereby becoming a part of Turner Broadcasting where they returned to New York State with a multi-sport two week event. In 2003, he said, Medalist Sports was re-launched and noted their core business goal was operational in nature and focused on the mass-participation side of the operation. Their goals, he said, were to provide a first class experience for participants, community members, friends, and family, who were the event sponsors' best marketing tools for future growth. He added that the company had experienced a steady increase in participation and overall festival growth.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Mr. Roden, who showed a video highlighting the details and national scope of the event. He said the local weekend festival would run from Friday, September 27 through Sunday September 29, 2013, and would be called the *Randonnee Cycliste*, *randonnee* meaning long ride in French. He summarized various statistics such as the number of first time riders in the Adirondacks (64%), parties staying overnight (69%), those traveling over ninety miles (66%), and those indicating some likelihood of return visits (91%). Mr. Roden noted the marketing plan would reach to Albany, New York City, and Syracuse and included bike shops and clubs, as well as the use of other marketing strategies to attract guests nationwide. He said the success of the program was due to partnerships with the business communities to grow the festival. Mr. Roden stated that Medalist Sports, LLC, had requested \$31,500 with 1,500 anticipated participants, an

estimated 1,000 heads in beds, and a total of 1,200 rooms for the weekend event. He noted the program sought volunteers from the local community for a variety of opportunities to staff the event. Mr. Birrell said the company wished to establish a long term commitment and he stated the mass participation side of the business had growth potential.

Responding to questions from Mr. Conover, Mr. Birrell stated that he was particularly drawn to the proposed start and finish at Beach Road, which he felt offered a celebratory vista from which to open and close the rides. This type of setting, he said, appealed to recreational cyclists, and also offered a family friendly environment, and helped to create sustainability in terms of entertainment value.

Relative to marketing, Mr. Birrell advised the event would be advertised east to Boston, south to New York City and Washington, D.C. and points west. Mr. Roden added that their goal was to build upon what Warren County had already accomplished in promoting the region as a tourist destination of choice.

Mr. Kenny reported \$21,500 in available event funding and he noted additional funds were available in the reserve fund. Ms. Grant noted that Centurion had returned \$20,000 and \$11,500 in 2012 and 2013 funding, respectively. Mr. Kenny expressed enthusiasm for the September event dates.

Motion was made by Mr. Mason and seconded by Mr. Dickinson to award \$31,500 to Medalist Sports, LLC, for the 2013 Randonnee Cycliste cycling festival to be held in Lake George from September 27 - 29, 2013.

A short discussion ensued with regard to a projected diminishing need for funds as the program grows. Mr. Birrell explained that as equity in the event grows, it would become a more valuable platform for commercial sponsors, and Mr. Bulmer concurred.

Mr. Kenny called the question and the motion was carried unanimously to award \$31,500 in occupancy tax funding to Medalist Sports, LLC for the event outlined above and the necessary resolution was authorized for the March 15, 2013 Board meeting. A copy of the resolution request form is on file with the minutes.

Mr. Kenny stated that the pending item pertaining to a Casino Gambling study would be tabled until the Legislative & Rules Committee could discuss the matter.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Gary Thornquist, Lake George R.V. Park, who stated his interest in creating a mechanism from which to increase communication to local businesses, such as receiving minutes via email. Mr. Kenny advised him to contact Joan Sady, Clerk of the Board, to be included on email correspondences. Mr. Thornquist suggested monthly roundtable discussion with the Tourism Department and Mr. Kenny said he would address the request at the next meeting of the Tourism Committee. Mr. Thornquist noted that although information was currently provided by the Tourism Department, additional details in terms of marketing and budget would be beneficial. In closing, Mr. Thornquist expressed his support for the September cycling event and he stated that as a business owner, it was essential to develop weekend events throughout the shoulder seasons.

As there was no further business to come before the Occupancy Tax Coordination Committee, on motion made by Mr. Bentley and seconded by Mrs. Frasier, Mr. Kenny adjourned the meeting at 12:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Collins, Legislative Office Specialist

